

NAVY STATEMENT REGARDING SECNAV OLF ANNOUNCEMENT JANUARY 22, 2008

The Secretary of the Navy and Chief of Naval Operations' staffs have reviewed U.S. Fleet Forces Command's assessment of new information provided by State officials in North Carolina and Virginia about locations that potentially meet Navy Outlying Landing Field (OLF) requirements.

The Navy commends Virginia and North Carolina leadership for their cooperation in collecting and providing new information about locations within their respective States. Their involvement in this process has been instrumental in facilitating the Navy's careful consideration of the public comments on the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

After thorough review of the new information provided by the states, and a similarly thorough reassessment of the Navy's operational requirements, the Navy has decided, under the National Environmental Policy Act, to terminate the current draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, and initiate a new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the impacts of construction and operation of an OLF at five new potential OLF sites to support Field Carrier Landing Practice training requirements for all Carrier Air Wing aircraft based at NAS Oceana and Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. Three of the sites are in Virginia, and two are in North Carolina. The Virginia sites include Cabin Point (formerly known as sites 2A, B and C in the information provided by Virginia officials), Dory (formerly known as site 3A) and Mason (formerly site known as site 3B). The North Carolina sites to be considered are Hale's Lake in Camden and Currituck Counties, and Sandbanks in Gates County. Based on our evaluation of available information, these sites each have operational, environmental, and population characteristics that make them viable site alternatives for further analysis.

The five sites analyzed in the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Bertie, Craven, Hyde, Perquimans and Washington/Beaufort Counties, NC) are no longer under consideration as potential OLF sites. The Navy will hold public scoping meetings on the new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in Spring 2008. A Federal Register notice is being developed that will announce opportunities for the public to provide input and propose additional sites for the new EIS. That notice is scheduled to be published in March/April 2008.

These five alternative sites, as well as the no action alternative, will be fully evaluated in a new EIS in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act before making any further decision on constructing an additional OLF. This analysis is expected to take about 30 months to complete.

Throughout this process the Navy will continue to work closely with the Commonwealth of Virginia and the State of North Carolina on these new sites and the Congress on this matter. The Navy believes that by working with state and local officials, we can understand their perspective on the issues and seek common ground on ways to mitigate impacts and identify potential benefits.